

SPRUCE KNOB-SENECA ROCKS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

JULY 22, 1965.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. EASTLAND, from the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany S. 7]

The Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, to whom was referred the bill (S. 7) to provide for the establishment of the Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area, in the State of West Virginia, and for other purposes, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with amendments and recommend that the bill (as amended) do pass.

EXPLANATION OF BILL

This bill directs the Secretary of Agriculture to establish the Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area in the State of West Virginia.

The area would consist of about 100,000 acres within and adjacent to, and which would be part of, the Monongahela National Forest. It would include Spruce Knob, Smoke Holes, and Seneca Rocks.

The Secretary would be authorized to acquire lands within the area, provide outdoor recreation facilities, and administer the area in accordance with the laws applicable to national forests so as best to provide for (1) public outdoor recreation benefits, (2) conservation of scenic, scientific, historic, and other values contributing to public enjoyment, and (3) such management, utilization, and disposal of natural resources as is compatible with recreational purposes.

The area is one of scenic beauty and high recreational value. Scenic attractions include mountains, valleys, caverns, and spectacular rock outcrops. Recreational possibilities include scenic drives, camping and picnicking, white water canoeing, hiking, rock climbing, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, cave exploring, and winter sports. Twenty-seven million people live within 150 miles of it, and 60

million people live within 300 miles. It is an area of high unemployment, economically depressed, and part of Appalachia. The Forest Service estimates that by 1970 annual use of the area will amount to 1 million visitor-days and will bring \$6.5 to \$10 million to the area. Thirty-nine percent of the lands are now in Government ownership.

COMMITTEE DELIBERATIONS

The committee's Subcommittee on Soil Conservation and Forestry held hearings in April on this bill, and the hearings have been printed. All witnesses favored enactment. Witnesses included the bill's sponsors, the Forest Service, the Governor and other officials of West Virginia, local residents, the Izaak Walton League, the National Wildlife Federation, and the American Automobile Association. Following the hearings and favorable report by the subcommittee, the committee considered the bill and raised several questions which were submitted to the Department of Agriculture and answered as follows:

Question. How many of the acres to be acquired are outside the forest boundaries, as of January 1, 1965?

Answer. 4,000 acres are outside the present Monongahela National Forest boundary.

Proposed acquisitions: Fee simple, 500 acres.

Scenic or conservation easements for most of remaining 3,500 acres.

The land and water conservation fund is not now available to acquire these needed lands and easements, but provisions contained in Department's recommended amendment would extend such authority to them.

Question. How much is total cost of project? Acquisition-development.

Answer. The projected costs are as follows:

Acquisition costs:

1st 5 years.....	\$1,200,000
Subsequent to 1st 5 years.....	2,300,000
Total.....	<u>3,500,000</u>

Development costs:

1st 5 years.....	8,450,000
Subsequent to 1st 5 years.....	7,830,000
Total.....	<u>16,280,000</u>

Combined acquisition and development costs:

1st 5 years.....	9,650,000
Subsequent to 1st 5 years.....	10,130,000
Total.....	<u>19,780,000</u>

[In acres]

	Inside forest boundary	Outside forest boundary
Gross area.....	96,000	4,000
Present Federal land.....	40,000	0
Non-Federal land.....	56,000	4,000
To be acquired in fee and easements: ¹		
1st 5 years.....	11,000	4,000
Subsequent to 1st 5 years.....	30,000	0

¹ Estimated to be 60 percent in fee and 40 percent in easements. Sites with high recreation potential would be acquired in fee. Scenic or conservation easements would be used to extent feasible to facilitate private ownership, management, and utilization of resources and lands compatible with the purposes of the national recreation area. Such instruments would be employed to maintain scenic strips along roads and trails, continue present uses such as farming and grazing, harmonize production and harvesting of timber, use of private lands for public commercial services, and to obtain public hunting and fishing rights.

Development during the 1st 5 years would consist of providing sufficient basic recreation facilities and principal scenic access roads within the national recreation area to accommodate 1,000,000 visitors annually. Subsequent facilities would be provided to meet the demands of increasing visitations estimated to reach a capacity of 5,000,000 annually prior to the year 2000.

Question. How does this relate to Appalachia bill? To what extent can Appalachia funds be used?

Answer. The Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area would complement the Appalachia program by providing recreation opportunities and facilities. The Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965 provides for various activities in the Appalachian region but contains no authority for the establishment and development of national recreation areas. Appalachia funds are not available for carrying out the purposes of S.7.

Question. Relation of land and water conservation fund bill to this measure. Could it be established under that act?

Answer. The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 does not contain authority for the establishment of national recreation areas. It establishes the land and water conservation fund. Moneys in this fund may be appropriated for use in part for the acquisition of lands for certain Federal purposes. The fund is available for these purposes only when it is appropriated under regular appropriation procedure. Lands which may be acquired with such appropriations include those within the boundaries of national forests as they existed on January 1, 1965. They must be primarily of value for outdoor recreation purposes. Lands within a national recreation area would meet this qualification. In order to make appropriations from the land and water conservation fund available for the acquisition of the needed lands and scenic easements within the Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area which are outside the present boundaries of the national forest the Department of Agriculture recommended an amendment to section 3(a) of S. 7. This amendment is set forth on page 4 of the Department's report of March 26, 1965.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

(1) The Department of Agriculture recommended that since the boundaries of the proposed area have been determined, and are shown on a map in the office of the Chief of the Forest Service, the bill could be made more definite by describing the area by reference to the map, instead of leaving its determination to the Secretary. The committee has recommended adoption of this amendment.

(2) The Departments of Agriculture and Interior recommended that to facilitate acquisition of lands within the area, appropriations from the land and water conservation fund be made available to acquire lands within the entire area. They are now available to acquire lands within the national forest boundaries, and most of the area is within those boundaries. The land and water conservation fund was established by the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, approved September 3, 1964 (78 Stat. 897). It is made up of recreation user fees, surplus property sale proceeds, and motor boat fuel taxes. Money in the fund is available only pursuant to appropriation act; and unless otherwise provided appropriations are allocated 60 percent for State purposes and 40 percent for Federal purposes. Under section 6 moneys appropriated for Federal purposes may be used for acquisition of various groups of lands, on of which is "areas of national forests as the boundaries of those forests exist on the effective date of this Act * * *." Since the effective date was January 1, 1965, the act authorizes use of the fund for acquisition of lands for the proposed recreation area which were within the forest boundaries on that date. The committee, in accordance with the Departments' suggestion, has recommended an amendment to permit the fund to be used in acquiring the 4,000 acres of the proposed recreation area which were outside the forest boundaries on that date.

(3) The Departments of Agriculture and Interior also recommended that provision be made to permit development of mineral and other nonrenewable natural resources as well as "renewable" natural resources. In accordance with this suggestion, the committee has recommended an amendment striking out the provision which would have limited development to "renewable" resources.

(4) The Izaak Walton League of America and the National Wildlife Federation submitted generally similar amendments requiring the Secretary to permit hunting and fishing in the area in accordance with State law, but authorizing him to prohibit hunting at particular times and places for reasons of public safety, administration, or public use and enjoyment. They stated that their purpose was to apply the same rule as is applicable to similar recreation areas administered by the National Park Service. The committee has therefore recommended such an amendment in language identical to that contained in section 5(b) of Public Law 88-492 establishing the Ozark National Scenic Riverways Area. This language has served as the model for subsequent bills prepared by the Department of the Interior. The Forest Service advises that it would follow this rule in any event, and it has no objection to the amendment.

DEPARTMENTAL VIEWS

The Departments of Agriculture and Interior recommended enactment with amendments. In his message of February 8, 1965, on natural beauty of our country, the President stated that he proposed to use the land and water conservation fund to establish the Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area and other enumerated recreation areas. The reports of the Departments are attached. Their amendments were adopted by the committee.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
Washington, D.C., March 26, 1965.

HON. ALLEN J. ELLENDER,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture and Forestry,
U.S. Senate.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This is in response to your request of January 21, 1965, for a report on S. 7, a bill to provide for the establishment of the Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area, in the State of West Virginia and for other purposes.

We recommend that S. 7 be enacted with the amendment suggested herein.

S. 7 would direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish the Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area to provide for public outdoor recreation use and enjoyment of the lands to be included therein by the people of the United States. As soon as practicable after passage of the bill, the Secretary of Agriculture would designate the lands to comprise this recreation area and would publish notice of such designation, together with a map, in the Federal Register. The national recreation area would include, but not be limited to, such features as Spruce Knob, the Smoke Holes, and Seneca Rocks. It would comprise lands currently within and adjacent to the Monongahela National Forest. When so designated, it would be administered as a part of the Monongahela National Forest and the boundaries of the forest would be enlarged to include the entire area. The national recreation area would be situated primarily in the drainage of the South Branch of the Potomac River. A maximum of 100,000 acres could be included in the designated area.

The bill would direct the acquisition of lands within the designated area determined by the Secretary to be needed or desirable for the purposes of the bill. It would direct the Secretary to institute an accelerated program of development facilities for outdoor recreation to meet the growing recreation needs of the people of the United States. It would authorize the Secretary to cooperate with Federal and State authorities and agencies that have programs which might hasten completion of the recreation area or for the purpose of assisting in the evaluation and effectuation of the establishment of adequate summer and winter outdoor recreation facilities. The national recreation area would be administered, protected, and developed in accordance with laws, rules, and regulations applicable to national forests to provide for public outdoor recreation benefits, conservation of scenic, scientific and other values, and management, utilization, and disposal of other renewable natural resources to the extent that such management will promote or is compatible with the basic purposes of the national recreation area.

The Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area would be located in the upper reaches of the Potomac River—principally in the watershed of the South Branch of the Potomac River above Petersburg, W. Va., including the North Fork of the South Branch. It would include Spruce Knob, the highest peak in West Virginia with an elevation of 4,860 feet and contiguous Spruce Mountain, Seneca Creek, large segments of the sidewalls and ridges of the South Branch of the Potomac and North Fork of South Branch above Royal Glen, the Smoke Holes area, North Mountain, Cave Mountain, Seneca Rocks, and other recreational, geologic, historic, and topographic features. It would be in Grant and Pendleton Counties, within and immediately adjoining the Monongahela National Forest.

About 40 percent of the lands within this area are national forest lands acquired under the Weeks law of March 1, 1911; some 60 percent are privately owned. Approximately 82 percent of the total area is forested, about 4 percent is cleared bottom land, and about 13 percent is other cleared lands—mainly in ridgetop and hillside farms; some abandoned and some still utilized.

The proposed national recreation area is easily accessible to a substantial part of the Nation's population. It is within a few hours' drive of over 6 million people, largely urban. Within 30 years, it is estimated that immediately tributary population will exceed 10 million people—predominantly city dwellers. Urban complexes of Pittsburgh, Washington, and Baltimore are within easy travel distance for weekend recreation, as are other cities and towns in southwest Pennsylvania, northern West Virginia, Virginia, and western Maryland.

Recreation resources include the fast-flowing, clear streams of the South Branch of the Potomac and tributary North Fork, which offer white water canoeing and excellent fishing; the high mountain country around Spruce Knob and Spruce Mountain, with beautiful and extensive scenic views; the highly scenic sidewalls of the two main streams; the long vistas of North Mountain, Cave Mountain, and other of the high ridges in the area of hiking, touring, and hunting; abundant wildlife with a capacity for increase; interesting and impressive geologic formations, such as the spires of Seneca Rocks, rising 1,000 feet above the valley floor, and Blue Rock, Castle Rock, Eagle Rock; caverns and caves, including the intriguing Smoke Holes and Seneca Caverns; and extensive opportunities for camping, picnicking, hiking, touring, rock hounding, and general scenic enjoyment. A high-level scenic highway for which surveys and construction plans are now underway by the Bureau of Public Roads, the State of West Virginia, and this Department will make these resources more accessible and will add to the opportunities to enjoy their scenic and recreation values. It will parallel the westerly edge of the area for about 20 miles. Scenery is outstanding, climate good, and historic sites date from Indian use and the Revolutionary War.

There is a possibility that there will be recommended as a part of the Potomac River water development and control facilities a dam at Royal Glen on the South Branch of the Potomac River just below its confluence with the North Fork of the South Branch. If and when built, such dam would create a reservoir extending up both the South Branch and North Fork of the South Branch for several miles. This reservoir would create a 2,800-acre lake which would become an integral part of the overall recreation complex.

Other resources of the proposed national recreation area include water and watersheds, timber, wildlife, some livestock grazing, and minerals. Location of the area in the headwaters of the Potomac makes it of high importance from a watershed standpoint. Soils in the South Branch drainage particularly are thin and topography is extremely rough, so that conservative and sound land management is essential to build up and protect watershed capacities. About 82 percent of the area is forested. While these lands are not of exceptional quality for timber production, they are capable, under good forest management techniques, of producing sustained crops of usable forest products which can contribute substantially to the economic resources of the tributary area.

Production and the taking of wildlife through fishing and hunting is an important function of these lands. They are high-quality habitat for deer, turkey, small game, and fish. Wildlife production can be enhanced by multiple-use management, including planwise harvesting of timber and the conversion of nonproductive areas and clearings to game habitat and game food patches. Much of the private land now is grazed by livestock. National forest lands are not grazed, except for two developed and maintained pastures in the vicinity of Spruce Knob. Known minerals include some low-grade iron ore in the South Fork of the Potomac drainage and limestone deposits in both the South Fork and the upper North Fork drainage. Most of the lands are under lease for gas exploration, but there is no oil or gas production to date.

Development and utilization of these resources is compatible and can be harmonized with use of the area for recreational purposes under multiple-use management programs carried out on national forest lands. The contributions of these resources to the economy of the counties concerned should be continued and increased.

The Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks area is well suited for designation and development as a national recreation area. To fully realize the benefits the area can provide there will need to be additional consolidation of national forest lands and there will need to be accelerated development of facilities for outdoor recreation. If this is done, there will result large and continuing increases in public use. To accommodate these users and to service their needs, there will have to be developed privately owned facilities in substantial quantity.

A national recreation area as proposed, therefore, would not only provide greatly increased public outdoor recreation opportunities in an area accessible to large centers of population, but also would materially advance the local economy. The counties involved are in areas of continued and substantial unemployment and a relatively low rate of economic activity. A national recreation area will benefit this situation, both immediately and in the long run, through: (a) The inflow of funds for accelerated development and intensified administration, and (b) the upbuilding of a permanent economic base oriented heavily to outdoor recreation but including also utilization of timber, minerals, and other resources.

Most of the lands, waters, or interests therein to be acquired for the proposed recreation area will be within the presently existing boundaries of the Monongahela National Forest. These may be acquired with appropriations from the land and water conservation fund. In order to facilitate the total acquisition program and permit purchase of the remaining areas with land and water conservation fund ap-

propriations, we recommend that S. 7 be amended by adding the following sentence in line 17 on page 2 after the first sentence in section 3(a):

"For the purpose of section 6 of the Act of September 3, 1964 (78 Stat. 897, 903), the boundaries of the Monongahela National Forest, as designated by the Secretary pursuant to section 2 of this Act, shall be treated as if they were the boundaries of that forest on January 1, 1965."

We also recommend that in line 6, page 4, the word "renewable" be deleted. This will make it clear that the development of mineral resources in the area could also be permitted.

The boundaries of the area that we propose for designation are presently known and shown on a map on file in the office of the Chief of the Forest Service. We therefore recommend that these boundaries be definitely referred to in the bill by the following amendment:

Page 2, delete all in lines 4 through 8 and insert in lieu thereof the following: "comprised of the area including Spruce Knob, Smoke Holes, and Seneca Rock, and lying primarily in the drainage of the South Branch of the Potomac River, the boundaries of which shall be those shown on the map entitled 'Proposed Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area,' dated March 1965, which is on file and available for public inspection in the office of the Chief, Forest Service, Department of Agriculture; and"

The Bureau of the Budget advises that the enactment of this proposed legislation would be in accord with the President's program.

Sincerely yours,

ORVILLE FREEMAN.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, D.C., March 26, 1965.

HON. ALLEN J. ELLENDER,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture and Forestry,
U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.

DEAR SENATOR ELLENDER: This responds to your request for the views of this Department on S. 7, a bill to provide for the establishment of the Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area, in the State of West Virginia, and for other purposes.

We recommend that the bill be enacted, with the amendments recommended herein.

The bill provides for establishment of an area of not more than 100,000 acres of land in West Virginia within and adjacent to the present boundaries of the Monongahela National Forest as the Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area. The area will include such unit or units as may be designated by the Secretary of Agriculture, including but not limited to Spruce Knob, Smoke Holes, and Seneca Rocks.

We believe that the establishment of the proposed national recreation area is justified because of its geographic location, accessibility to large segments of our population, and outstanding recreation resources. The area meets the criteria for national recreation areas, set forth in Policy Circular No. 1, issued by the Recreation Advisory Council on March 26, 1963. The National Park Service of this De-

partment, in its March 1961 report on West Virginia's recreation resources, identified the outstanding scenic, geologic, and recreation values of the area and recommended its establishment as a national recreation area. The report by the President's Appalachian Regional Commission, 1964 also specifically recommended the establishment of the area as a national recreation area.

Approximately 40 percent of the proposed recreation area is situated within the Monongahela National Forest. The Secretary of Agriculture would administer the area in accordance with the laws, rules, and regulations applicable to national forests to provide for (1) public outdoor recreation benefits; (2) conservation of scenic, scientific, historic, and other values contributing to public enjoyment; and (3) management, utilization, and disposal of renewable natural resources to promote the purposes for which the recreation area is established.

Significantly, the highest point in West Virginia, Spruce Knob, is located in the area. The mountains in this region have steep slopes, sheer cliffs, and large rock formations that rise spectacularly from the valley floor and mountainsides. Impressive geological exposures, limestone caverns, alpine-type high meadows, picturesque valleys, and an abundance of water in the form of clear mountain streams and large springs are a part of the natural scene. All of these features make the area ideally suited for outdoor recreation activities—camping, picnicking, hunting, fishing, sightseeing, winter sports, canoeing, rock climbing, and the enjoyment of scenic and natural historic values.

The proposed national recreation area is located primarily in the watershed of the South Branch of the Potomac River. This branch of the Potomac and its tributaries offer white water canoeing and excellent fishing; the high mountain country around Spruce Knob and Spruce Mountain, North Mountain, Cave Mountain, and other high ridges provide scenic vistas and varied opportunities for public recreation. Interesting and impressive geologic formations such as the spires of Seneca Rocks, Blue Rock, Eagle Rock, the Smoke Holes, Seneca Caverns, and other caverns and caves illustrate the power of earth-shaping forces and provide an inspiring backdrop for camping, picnicking, sightseeing, nature study, hiking, and mountain climbing.

The Corps of Engineers has proposed the construction of a Royal Glen Dam on the South Branch of the Potomac which would create a 2,800-acre reservoir. This reservoir would cover about one-half of the Smoke Holes, an outstanding stretch of wild river particularly attractive to white water canoeists. In his February 8 message on natural beauty the President asked the Secretary of the Interior to review the Potomac River Basin development plan now under review by the Chief of Army Engineers.

Hunting and fishing are important uses of the area. The river and streams are famous for their trout and bass and the land is high-quality habitat for deer, turkey, and small game. Forest game habitat improvement work is carried on in the Spruce Knob area under the Federal aid in wildlife restoration program, which is administered by the Secretary of the Interior, through the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. Federal aid funds have been used by the State to develop game habitat for deer and turkey. The work consists primarily of game clearings, plantings of grain, grass and legumes, waterhold development, and improvement of hunter access roads and trails.

The State department of natural resources also has participated in the construction of Spruce Knob Lake within the Monongahela National Forest. The lake has a surface area of 27 acres and cost about \$27,000. The State stocks the lake annually with legal-size rainbow trout which provide a very popular sport fishery.

Because of its location in the heart of the Allegheny Mountains, proximity to large population masses, and outstanding recreation resources, this area will provide excellent recreation opportunities, particularly for the residents of Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. More than 30 million people, most of whom reside in urban areas, live within a 250-mile radius.

We recommend the following amendments of the bill:

1. On page 2, line 17, insert after the sentence ending on that line the following sentence:

"For the purposes of section 6 of the Act of September 3, 1964 (78 Stat. 897, 903), the boundaries of the Monongahela National Forest, as designated by the Secretary pursuant to section 2 of this Act, shall be treated as if they were the boundaries of that forest on January 1, 1965."

This amendment will enable all of the lands, waters, or interests therein acquired for the national recreation area to be financed from moneys appropriated from the land and water conservation fund.

2. On page 4, line 6, delete the word "renewable".

This amendment will enable the Secretary of Agriculture to permit mineral development within the recreation area, in the event he wishes to do so.

The Bureau of the Budget has advised that the enactment of this bill, if amended as suggested in this report and in the report of the Department of Agriculture, would be in accord with the President's program.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN A. CARVER, JR.,
Under Secretary of the Interior.

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